

Westside Communications Newsletter

October 2016

Hello, Westside families—and HAPPY FALL!

Believe it or not, we start October tomorrow! Here's to Pumpkin Spice everything, sweatshirt-and-jeans weather, and cheering for the football team who's captured your heart (Go Warriors!)

Growing up in the metro area, I knew Westside was a special place to go to school. Every single day I now see proof of that in spades; THANK YOU to all of the parents, educators and students who have been sending me information about all of the WONDERFUL things you are doing!

Within the next week or so, you should be receiving the first edition of our Quarterly Westside Pride newsletter in the mail. It includes a list of upcoming events, reports about our achievement and recent test scores, and of course, photos and stories about the great things happening in our schools!

Here are more highlights taking place in Westside Community Schools this fall:

FROM THE ARTS

Congratulations to **Westside High student Nikolas Luntjer**, recently selected as one of only 18 young people cast in Opera Omaha's production of La Boheme. The show runs November 4 & 6 and we hope there's a large Westside contingent there cheering him on! You'll also see Nikolas running on the Westside Cross Country team and performing with Show Choir Connection.

We have an INCREDIBLE opportunity open to all families this fall; national dance troupe **Arts and Dance Company will perform Flamenco Ballet at Westside Middle School** on October 11th. Spanish teacher Kelly Schulz has been working for four years to bring this talented group to Omaha; they have performed more than 200 shows across the country. Tickets are \$16 per person, \$1 for WMS students. Show times are at 9:50 and 11:15 that morning. You can purchase tickets and get more information at <http://www.flamencoballet.com/reservations2.html>.



Warrior Theatre presented a terrific production of Little Women this fall, kicking off a jam-packed season of opportunities for our talented students. October 11-14, the Blue Barn Theatre will host workshops for WHS acting students. October 21, you are invited to Nebraska Shakespeare's presentation of Hamlet at Westside High School (show begins at 1:30.) And our own WHS Theatre Director Jeremy Stoll has been cast in Foreign Flames, a collaboration between UNO and Creighton University! The shows will run November 3 at UNO and November 12 at Creighton.

ArtPals (Art Parents and Artists Leading Students) just got word world-renowned artist **Scott Blake** will be visiting Sunset Hills this October! Mr. Blake will work with students October 24-26 to create their own 'Pop Art' style portrait, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these learners and their families.

Prairie Lane will welcome **Nigerian Arts/Peace Ambassador to the UN Ibiyinka Alao** during the week of October 24-28 as the PL Artist in Residency. This week long event of workshops and learning promotes the District's Strategic Plan of personalized learning, combined with an unforgettable experience.

Westside Middle School's Hot Jazz musicians and percussionists took part in very special workshops in September, led by recording artist and educator **Dr. Steve Raybine!** Dr. Raybine, a Westside parent himself, spoke to about 250 students about how to use music in our lives to benefit ourselves and others.

The 8th grade chorus from Westside Middle School was invited to perform at the 2016 Voices for Children Gala last weekend. Many of those who attended, including KETV's Rob McCartney and event organizers, commented via social media about the wonderful job these talented students did!



Westside's Renaissance ReEnactors Club took a road trip to Kansas City in September to volunteer at one of the nation's largest Renaissance fairs. This is an opportunity made available to these students every year, and one they clearly enjoy!

FROM ATHLETICS



The Westside Softball Team celebrated Senior Night this week, sending out the talented student athletes who will say goodbye this year. Districts begin October 6; the state tournament begins October 10.

The Westside Volleyball Team honored teachers at their home game earlier this week. Each player recognized an educator who has made an impact on their life and presented them with a personal message. Lawlors donated t-shirts to all t-shirts, and HyVee donated cookies and cupcakes for the event.

The Westside Football Team spent time at Oakdale Early Childhood Center this week, helping our District's youngest students learn about different kinds of balls and what football is. Playoffs begin October 28.

FROM THE CLASSROOM

Our **CAPS program** is publishing a newsletter! Learn more about the Center for Advanced Professional Studies and how this one-of-a-kind program could help your high school student obtain college credit or certifications, find internships, and pursue career opportunities. The latest edition is attached!

Ms. Kleinschmit's 4th graders at Rockbrook Elementary had a special geography lesson this week.. they FaceTimed with a mystery class! All week these learners prepared questions to ask to determine where their new friends were from, and they discovered they were talking with Mrs. Collentine's class in Connecticut! Rockbrook has been a leader for our District in the use of technology; this is something Terri Kleinschmit plans to try again in the future!



Mr. Hellman's class at Rockbrook also had a special visitor this week.. Dr. McCann was their guest teacher! This was the first of several times this year Dr. McCann hopes to return to the classroom.



The Early Childhood Center at Paddock Road has had several special guests this fall already, including Firefighter Mike from the Omaha Police Department!

October 11-14 is Westside's week of education to promote higher learning. College reps will be at Westside High School throughout the week to talk to students interested in institutions like Nebraska, Wesleyan, Creighton, Metro and Iowa Western. We encourage you to wear your favorite college sweater on October 14! Then on October 18, Westside High's Counseling Office will host Education Quest Night in Room 220. Parents: bring your laptop and tax information and our team will help you figure out your family's college plan.

ENGAGEMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY

Westside High School student Jesse Sward is also working to become an Eagle Scout, an elite honor only the highest ranking scouts obtain. He has spent several weekends this fall building a community garden at Paddock Road Elementary, work recently featured on KMTV. Jesse is also raising money to recoup some of the thousands he invested personally in the project. Here is a link: <https://www.gofundme.com/2qsc6zg>

Westgate teacher Mary Morris has raised nearly \$2500 to fight Alzheimers disease, and recently took part in the Walk To End Alzheimers to honor her father, Benedetto Buccheri. To learn more about Team Nonno Benito, click here:

http://act.alz.org/site/TR?fr_id=9162&pg=personal&px=10846341

Westside Community Schools is providing a **free parenting training program** this fall, open to parents with children of any age and hosted by the Love and Logic Institute, Inc. Every Monday from October 17-November 21, you are invited to Paddock Road from 6pm-8pm to learn about consequences, ways to neutralize arguing and more. To register, email Sarah Lieske at Lieske.Sarah@westside66.net

We also encourage you to consider the **2016 Monster Mash Run/Walk** for our neighbors and at Children's Hospital and Medical Center. The October 23 fundraiser takes place at Rockbrook Village and includes family fun events to promote health and well being. Dr. McCann is even a costume judge!

Westside Community Schools is proud to once again partner with the **TeamMates Mentoring Program!** We invited you to a free information event hosted by legendary Coach Tom Osborne on Wednesday October 6th at Aksarben Cinema from 5:00-6:00pm. RSVP to Dani Bradford at danibradford@aol.com. Then, October 26th is Jersey Day; every WCS employee who donates \$3 to TeamMates can wear gear or team colors from their favorite sport. We encourage all Westside students to take part as well for free or with a \$1 donation if it's possible for your family.

BOARD AND BOND

After an extensive process including applications and public interviews, the Westside Schools Board of Education will appoint a new member October 4. The meeting begins at 6:30pm at the ABC Administration building and is open to the public. Finalists are Meagan Van Gelder, Alexis Boulos, Doug Krenzer and Jim Rose.

An informational meeting for Sunset Hills Elementary is scheduled for October 20 at 6:00pm. District leaders and Project Advocates will share the status of the project and answer questions. We have also posted details regarding the ongoing dirt haul between Oakdale and Sunset on our District website, www.westside66.org.

THANK YOU for entrusting your children to Westside Community Schools. Please let me know if there is an event, unique opportunity, something or someone special in your child's life that I can share with our District. As always, I encourage you to follow our channels on social media (Twitter and Facebook) and check our District website often for links to media coverage and new information. My door (and email!) is always open!

Have a WONDERFUL weekend!

Brandi Petersen
Director of Communications & Engagement
Westside Community Schools.